The Emerging Women Leaders Programme
2021/22 yearbook
Foreword

As the Royal College of Physicians’ (RCP’s) elected vice president for education and training, and an untrained leader who has found the journey at times lonely and difficult, it gives me enormous pleasure to introduce the yearbook for our 2021/22 cohort of emerging women leaders (EWL).

The individuals you will meet in the following pages are female doctors who are in the early years of consultant-level leadership journeys. Yet, at the start of the programme they had already achieved so much, I felt humbled and privileged to get to know them through the EWL programme.

Developing quality female leaders has never been more important.

Women now make up circa 65% of medical graduates in the UK and there has been an historic gender imbalance in leadership roles in healthcare spheres. The RCP is also minded of the previous ‘sink or swim’ approach to and the critical importance of clinical leadership in patient safety and in creating a happy, well-trained workforce who need to be retained in this wonderful profession. Thus, in 2018 the college established this flagship scheme with support from the Wolfson Foundation. The success of the programme can be measured in its popularity, year on year there is stronger competition to gain a coveted place and scheme alumnae are already succeeding in previously inaccessible roles.

As we say farewell to this group of dedicated and accomplished individuals, we are certain that they will achieve great things. I have observed the camaraderie and trust that has built within the group as they shared their stories and experiences.

They have grown and developed by learning about themselves, their leadership styles and preferences, by leaning on each other and through the mentorship of more experienced colleagues. This cohort of doctors has eagerly embraced every opportunity on offer. I can say unashamedly that RCP basks and will continue to bask in their reflected glory.

As we face fresh and uncertain challenges in delivering compassionate, effective, efficient and holistic care to populations both locally and abroad, I am confident that these doctors will rise to the task. Their future journeys will be scaffolded by fresh knowledge and experiences provided by the EWL course but, perhaps more importantly, by enacting the collaborative style they have witnessed on the programme and interacting with the new friends they have made. It has been a pleasure to observe their development and we wish them the very best for the future and look forward to hearing about their journeys in the years to come.

Áine Burns
Senior censor and vice president for education and training
Royal College of Physicians

Developing quality female leaders has never been more important.
Anna Kydd
Consultant cardiologist

What have you gained from the programme?
Completing this programme has given me confidence in my leadership abilities. The opportunity to network with peers and hear from experienced leaders about their own personal journeys has been inspiring. Mentoring has allowed me to reflect critically on my leadership style, identify opportunities for personal development, and learn from future challenges and successes as my career progresses.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
I have felt better equipped to take on leadership positions and put myself forward for roles that I previously would not have considered.

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes

Ashling Lillis
Consultant in acute medicine

What have you gained from the programme?
At the point I joined the programme I had just become clinical lead for my department, which had been providing acute care for COVID-19 patients for the past 14 months. The days I spent with the other women on this programme gave me energy and enthusiasm as well as an invaluable space to share the challenges and frustrations of this role. The time spent with the cohort and with the leaders who came to talk to us has given me much more confidence in my own leadership style.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
This programme has helped in my leadership journey; hearing lots of amazing women share their vulnerabilities and ‘imposter syndrome’ has made me challenge when I or other women talk ourselves down. It can be scary to rock the boat publicly, but my team has said that they appreciate that I am a more visible champion for our service (which happens to be entirely female!). I have been inspired to start some coaching to help me make the decision about what is next in my career.

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes
Carolina Caprario
Respiratory consultant

What have you gained from the programme?
Getting to know others also taking part in the programme is my greatest gain. To be surrounded by like-minded, driven, hard-working people was a fantastic opportunity. My mentor, Emma, also provides new perspectives on situations at work. I gained knowledge about myself, my personality, different mindsets and how to work with other personalities. There were valuable lectures and talks from inspirational female leaders in medicine. Overall, I have more confidence and leadership skills, and in future if I require a new perspective, then I now know a group of women to whom I can reach out.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
Since the leadership programme, I have become the co-chair of our Medical Staffing Committee, but most excitingly, this has enabled me to take over running the women in medicine support group for female doctors in our trust.

Would you recommend the programme?
I would highly recommend this programme for a really enjoyable year, meeting great people, with so much personal growth and learning. I have greater confidence, knowledge, people skills, and a support network with other women in the programme.

Elizabeth Hamlyn
Consultant physician and HIV clinical lead, King’s College Hospital

What have you gained from the programme?
The peer support aspects of the course have been particularly valuable, including the action learning sets and meeting other women who have gone through similar leadership journeys. It has also been great to have a mentor with whom I can bounce ideas and talk through any challenges.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
The programme has greatly increased my confidence in my ability as a leader, allowing me to recognise my own leadership style and values, and to become better equipped to tackle challenging situations. It has also helped me to gain clarity in my future leadership direction and consider which future leadership roles I may apply for.

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes!
Jeanny Varghese
Consultant in diabetes and endocrine

What have you gained from the programme?
This programme has given me a better understanding of the types of leaders and the skills required to be an effective leader. It has also emphasised the importance of factors and experiences influencing leadership styles and the impact of role models.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
It has improved my confidence in pursuing leadership roles as a consultant and inspired me to be a better role model for my junior colleagues. There were many opportunities to network and learn from experiences of other colleagues.

Would you recommend the programme?
I would recommend this programme. Quite enjoyable, well-structured and experienced mentors.

Emma Hayton
Consultant

What have you gained from the programme?
Tools and skills to equip me in leadership. Space and time to think these through, often with support from peers. Mentorship. Inspiration from a wide variety of women in current leadership positions.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
I have increased confidence when contemplating the next step in my leadership journey. I can better recognise the challenges that managers in healthcare settings are facing, and different ways of approaching leadership, and I feel I can also support my managers more effectively.

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes
Jennifer Graves
Respiratory consultant

What have you gained from the programme?
Having been a consultant for 11 years I felt comfortable in my clinical role but struggled to feel confident in leadership positions. The course has allowed me to understand more about my strengths with regards to leadership, how to improve on my areas of weakness and how to get the best out of the teams I work with and lead. I found hearing the stories of other woman leaders to be inspiring, but I found the most benefit from speaking to other women consultants and discussing the challenges I face at work and coming up with real life answers to my problems.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
Since starting the course, I have taken on the role of clinical director for Dorset targeted lung health checks. I have also reassessed my priorities at work to ensure I can give the time to the roles I wish to pursue, rather than saying yes to things that are not perhaps as high a priority for me and I am not allocated the time to do!

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes!

Karen Neoh
Consultant in palliative medicine,
St Gemma’s Hospice

What have you gained from the programme?
This course has given me confidence in my own abilities. It has changed my perception of what a good leader is and made me reflect upon how I lead. Listening to the inspiring female speakers was highly motivating. The peer support aspect of this course is great – we continue to support each other both in person and remotely. Talking through challenges using the action learning sets has been helpful for specific issues but also as a framework for the future.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
Learning about different leadership styles and how different people work within teams has allowed me to consider how I work with others and take a different approach in situations I find challenging. The programme has empowered me to consider taking on more senior roles, while considering what it is I enjoy and want to take on at this time in my career.

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes, probably most helpful for those within the first 3 years of their consultant posts.
Kathleen Bell
Clinical director, acute medicine,
London North West University
Healthcare NHS Trust

What have you gained from the programme?
The most valuable aspect of the programme was the ability to learn among a group of wonderful, inspiring women. The support that they gave me (especially during the action learning sets) really helped as I embarked on the role as clinical director. I feel more confident in my abilities to lead the team, but with a heightened awareness of my limitations and how to manage these. Having a network of like-minded women to check in with from now on is amazing.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
At the beginning of the programme, I was considering whether to apply for the CD role in my department. Over the course of the programme, I was supported in applying (with success) and completing the first 6 months in role.

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes!

Lucy Bemand-Qureshi
Consultant in palliative medicine

What have you gained from the programme?
Recognising and valuing my strengths and weaknesses rather than changing myself. My organisational skills and pastoral mindset may be different from ‘classic’ leadership skills. I have reflected on how these can fit into the kind of leadership role I want while also recognising that my skillset is not fixed forever.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
From my clinical lead: ‘As her line manager as well as her appraiser, it was a pleasure to complete this appraisal. It was an opportunity to celebrate the very significant growth that has taken place in Dr Bemand-Qureshi’s role as a consultant over the past year. She has achieved so much, including embedding research into her job plan, third author on a paper for the specialty BMJ, increasing the breadth of her influence as a consultant and rising to embrace new leadership, management and supervisory roles.’

Would you recommend the programme?
Certainly, especially if it could be non-hybrid. The better days were by far when face-to-face or using Teams for all rather than a mix.
Maryam Ahmed  
Consultant respiratory physician

What have you gained from the programme?
Quite early in my consultant career, I unexpectedly found myself as clinical lead for the pleural service at my trust, but I doubted my suitability for the role, which was in part the reason I applied for the programme. I was not sure what to expect going into it but thought I would be told what I needed to do to be a good leader. I was wrong. Instead, I met the most inspiring group of women leaders, explored various facets of leadership and the challenges of being a woman leader. As a woman from an ethnic minority background, I was left motivated to believe in myself and to break down some of those internal barriers that have stopped me achieving some of my goals. Having a personal mentor for the duration of the programme provided an invaluable experience, and one that I feel privileged to have been a part of. Perhaps the highlight for me was the opportunity to hear from a number of successful and inspirational women leaders, their journeys, their challenges and their message to us that we are more than capable. What I have gained from the programme will most certainly shape my leadership journey throughout my career.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
Since completing the programme I have not taken on any new roles, but I have felt more confident in my current role, and I have been implementing my learning from the programme into my current practice. Looking ahead I am in a much better position to consider future roles, which I would not have done prior to completing the programme.

Would you recommend the programme?
Most definitely!
What have you gained from the programme?
The Emerging Women Leaders Programme offered me the opportunity to meet some of the most inspirational women working within medicine at present. These inspiring women demonstrated that roles that I previously thought were unattainable, may, in fact, be a realistic goal. Through improved self-awareness of my strengths, weaknesses and leadership styles, I have developed the confidence to apply for senior leadership roles I previously would have avoided due to fear of failure. The camaraderie between the like-minded delegates on this programme was the ‘icing on the cake’ and I am sure we will support each other in the many years to come in our progression within medicine.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
The EWL programme gave me the confidence to identify those aspects of my job that I enjoyed, but also, to recognise other aspects that were not fulfilling. As a result, I decided to relinquish one of my roles to allow more time to focus on my passion of setting up same day emergency care services at my trust. The extra time created within my job plan allowed me to take the role of clinical lead for a project to open a new £6.4 million same day emergency care unit. During the development of this project, I provided clinical leadership in the designing of clinical pathways and standard operating procedures and liaised closely with our clinical commissioning group partners to ensure that the service would meet the needs of the local population. Within the first few weeks of opening, we have demonstrated improved waiting times, patient experience and staff morale. Without the EWL programme I would not have had the leadership skills, nor the resilience, required to take on such a massive project and overcome the many obstacles that were encountered along the way.

Additionally, as a direct result of the knowledge, skills and confidence I developed during the EWL programme, I intend to apply for the role of associate clinical director for acute medicine and subsequently clinical director for urgent and emergency care to progress my career in leadership.

Would you recommend the programme?
Absolutely. I would suggest that it is essential for any women hoping to progress into senior leadership roles.
Priyanka Chandratre
Consultant rheumatologist

What have you gained from the programme?
I have thoroughly enjoyed the peer support, bouncing ideas off each other, problem solving skills and confidence boost this EWL programme has provided! It is morale boosting and comforting to share ideas/concerns. I value the time and people management skills this programme has empowered me with.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
I have successfully delivered a business case to support a prescriber pharmacist within our directorate, which to a large extent came about after discussion with colleagues at the EWL workshops. The recruitment phase is in progress. I have also been the RCP London representative for the New Consultants Committee, from West Midlands. These leadership roles have been influenced by my participation at the EWL workshops!

Would you recommend the programme?
I would 100% recommend the EWL programme as a means to broaden your outlook and gain peer support/networking with like-minded female leaders/consultants. I had the opportunity to meet so many lovely consultants whom I would never have met otherwise! It has truly been a confidence boost! Thank you, RCP London!

Rachel Dancer
Consultant in acute medicine, Warwick Hospital

What have you gained from the programme?
As a result of taking part in the Emerging Women Leaders Programme I have more confidence in managing the teams I work with and have gained space and time to consider how I want my career to develop in the future. I have also gained strategies for resolving issues in the future.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
Following my participation in the programme, I will be taking over the role of governance lead for my department, alongside my existing role as audit and research lead. I feel I have a better understanding of how to manage the multiple roles that make up my job plan and more confidence in my ability to lead the teams I work with.

Would you recommend the programme?
I would recommend the programme. In particular, the mentorship and peer support I gained as a result of participating in the programme were extremely motivating.
Ruth Todd
Consultant acute medicine St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

What have you gained from the programme?
As a new consultant in acute medicine, I found the EWL programme invaluable. I have had the privilege to meet a cohort of like-minded and inspirational female consultants from across the country. It has definitely made me understand my own strengths and weaknesses in terms of leadership.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
It has helped me to understand how to adapt my leadership style. I feel more confident when faced with a scenario or problem that challenges my leadership abilities. Action learning sets introduced at the beginning of the programme are an excellent framework that can be used day to day in clinical practice. I have a greater understanding of personality traits and why they may not be receptive to certain leadership styles.

Would you recommend the programme?
The programme has been incredible. The peer support and mentorship journey has been something that I will never forget.

Sarah James
Consultant geriatrician and deputy clinical lead

What have you gained from the programme?
The best part was being given the time and headspace to develop myself as a leader. I really valued sharing the journey with others on the programme; the action learning sets provided an opportunity to work through thorny issues together and gain invaluable advice and feedback from like-minded peers. Hearing from my peers and some inspirational keynote speakers, it has made me reflect on my home–work balance, I feel encouraged that I can develop myself as a leader and maintain this balance.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
I think I already knew what kind of leader I am, the programme provided me with some insight into this and also how to use my strengths to get the best out of myself and others. It has provided me with confidence in my leadership style and pushed me to do things that previously I would have found challenging. I am still early in my career and leadership journey and feel excited to see where it takes me next.

Would you recommend the programme?
I would definitely recommend the programme, I don’t think it matters where you are in your leadership journey or if you want to pursue specific leadership roles, it provides the time and environment to explore this. The programme is a really great mix of action learning sets, leadership theory and keynote speakers. I have already sent details to my colleagues encouraging them to apply!
Seema Jham
Consultant nephrologist and foundation programme training director

What have you gained from the programme?
The journey of this programme allowed me to gain fantastic support and learn from my peers’ experience. The course was extremely interactive with honest opinions of individuals’ leadership difficulties through experience. It allowed me to reflect on my own leadership style and approach to resolutions in a busy, complex and fast-paced working environment.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
Completing this course gave me the confidence to apply for a foundation programme director role, which I have now been in for the past 6 months. I would highly recommend this course to my peers due to its uniqueness of 1-1 and peer group mentoring.

Would you recommend the programme?
Absolutely

Sundari Ampikaipakan
Consultant respiratory physician

What have you gained from the programme?
It was an absolute privilege to be part of this programme. As a consultant of 10 years standing, there was a part of me that was incredibly nervous at applying for a programme that I felt most people would think I should have done at the beginning of my career. However, I think this programme is brilliant at any stage in your career as it gives you such good insights into understanding your leadership style and playing to your strengths. Furthermore, you meet an incredible bunch of women who are so empowering that, at the risk of sounding exceedingly cheesy, ‘gives you wings!’

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
I have gained the confidence to put myself forward for roles that I would not have considered. At the end of the programme, I applied to be service director of my department.

Would you recommend the programme?
I would recommend EWL with absolutely no hesitation. I would do it again if I could!
Varunika Lecamwasam
Community diabetes consultant physician

What have you gained from the programme?
Such a wealth of important educational information! The networking opportunities with the other consultants in this group, as well as our respected seniors within the RCP, were all precious opportunities provided as a consequence of attending this excellent course. The course lead Amanda Sara is amazing.

How has the programme affected your leadership journey so far?
It has strengthened my inner ‘muscle’ with regards to RCP endorsed leadership – as well as building precious networking links with my peers and also our senior RCP role models to whom we respectfully look up.

Would you recommend the programme?
Yes!
The Emerging Women Leaders Programme
2021/22 yearbook

For further information
Visit: www.rcp.ac.uk/ewl
Email: WomenInMedicine@rcp.ac.uk